

STANLEY SWENSON NICOLAY

Colonel Stan Nicolay (USMC Retired, Fig. 1), a charter member of the Lepidopterists' Society, died at age 87 on 5 December 2004 at his home in Virginia Beach, VA, USA after a 20 year battle with prostate cancer. Stan contributed prodigiously to the Lepidoptera community and to knowledge of Lepidoptera. He served the Society as President and Treasurer, attended annual meetings regularly for decades, helped establish The Butterfly Society of Virginia, was an active collector in the Neotropics and a superb preparator, had a long association with the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC, USA) and the Allyn Museum of Entomology (now part of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera, Gainesville, FL, USA), and published numerous taxonomic papers on the Neotropical Hesperidae and Lycaenidae.

Stan was born in Colfax, Washington, USA, on 14 March 1917 and began collecting butterflies at age 14. He received a BS degree in Zoology from the University of Washington. Stan considered a career as a professional biologist (his major professor hoped that he would become a Coleopterist), but joined the Marine Corps and became a Marine aviator in 1941. He flew fighter planes in the Pacific in WWII, rising through the ranks during service in the Korean and Vietnam wars to retire as a Marine Corps Colonel in 1968.

Even during his military career, Stan found time for butterflies. For example, in the midst of conflict on Guadalcanal on 18 September 1942, he wrote in his diary, "Had the late patrol today, so had most of the day to myself for a change. Sure collected some nice insects." While stationed later in southern California, he met John Comstock and Lloyd Martin at the Los Angeles County Museum, and they encouraged his interest in Lepidoptera. In 1960 while commanding the military group at Vieques, a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico, he used a lull in military activities to collect butterflies on the island.

Stan's collecting friend, Gordon B. Small, Jr., began a job teaching mathematics in the Canal Zone (now Canal Area) of Panama in September 1962. A few months later, Stan visited Gordon in Panama. It was the first of many collecting trips to the Neotropics, and it solidified Stan's interest in Neotropical Hesperidae and Lycaenidae. In January 1969, Stan flew from Panama to Colombia on a Smithsonian sponsored trip (Fig. 2), which was followed by a jaunt with his son Stephen to Ecuador in 1972. Stan continued to make regular collecting forays to Central and South America

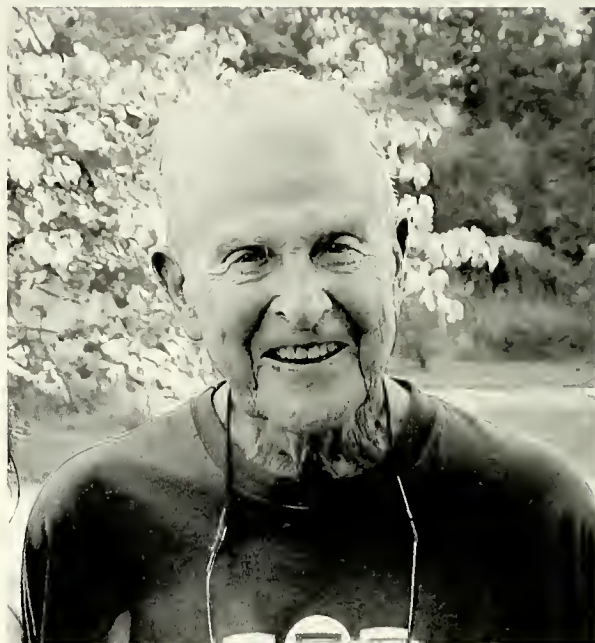


FIGURE 1. Stanley S. Nicolay, July 2004, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

(including Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil) for the next 25 years with a variety of colleagues, including the authors of this obituary. Perhaps the two most significant field trips were a sojourn through the central plateau of Brazil with Keith Brown, Jr., in 1969 and a 3,000 mile journey with Curtis Callaghan in 1978 from Brazil's Rio de Janeiro to Santarem and back on the Transamazonica road system that had just been built. To our knowledge, Stan was the first resident North American butterfly collector to make regular collecting trips to Panama and South America.

Stan was a meticulous "technician." His spreading technique for delicate butterflies used pinning blocks with two fine threads to flatten the wings long enough to apply glassine strips. He was a master at clipping the strong thoracic muscles of skippers to make the wings lie flat. He always intended his collection to be both scientific and aesthetic, and it was. Despite the significant contributions of his scientific papers, he often commented in later years that it was the collecting and technical preparation of specimens that he most enjoyed.

Stan found that he was unable to identify many of the Neotropical Lycaenidae that he had collected and decided in the mid-1960s to write taxonomic papers to help solve this problem. Because he lacked the necessary background, he relied heavily on advice from

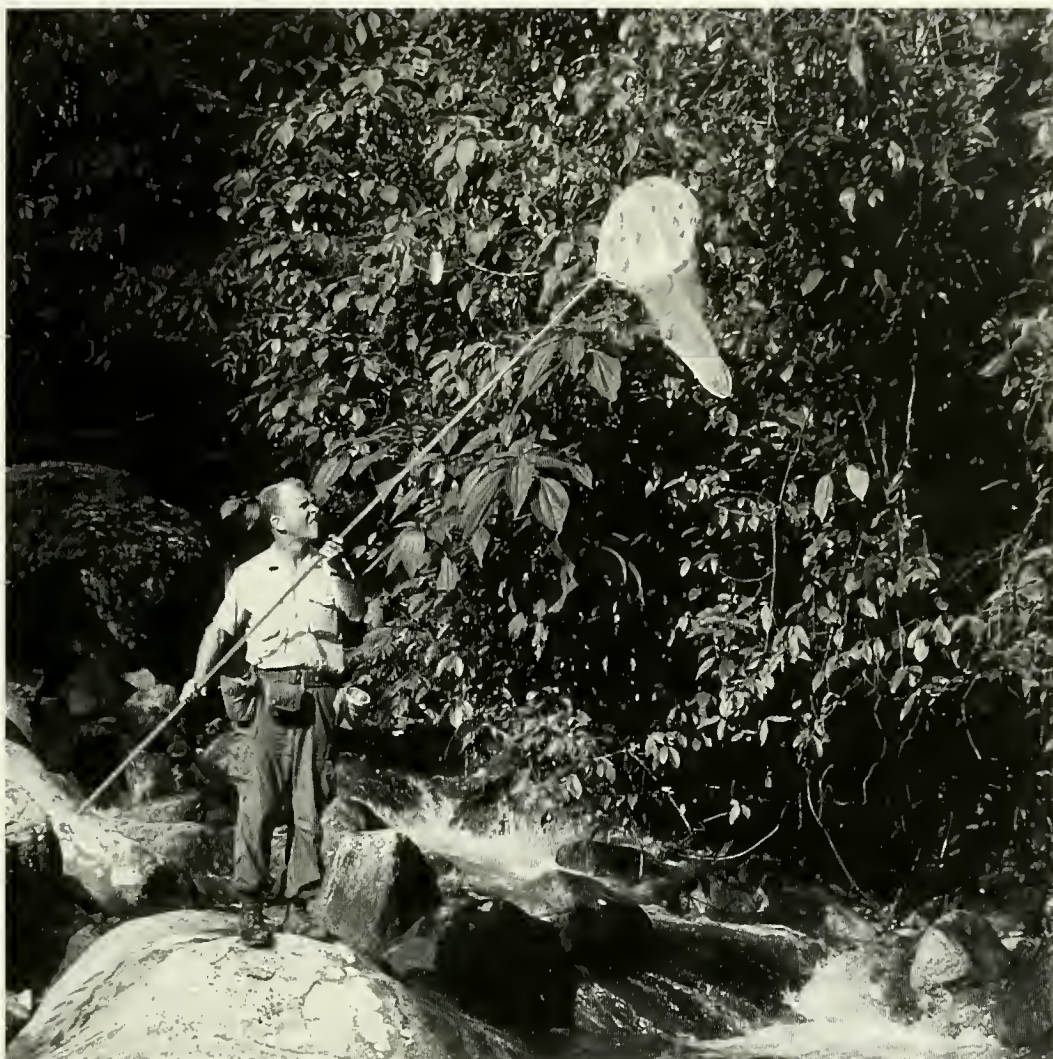


FIGURE 2. Stanley S. Nicolay, 1969, collecting in Caquetá Province, Colombia.

professional biologists, especially Jerry Powell, who was then Editor of the Society's *Journal*. It took him more than five years to write and publish the first paper naming the genus *Symbiopsis*, but other publications followed more quickly. Stan's revisions of lycaenid genera were the first comprehensive works on the Neotropical lycaenid genera and the first to make extensive use of female genitalic morphology (except for two papers by W. D. Field).

Stan's association with the Smithsonian Institution began in 1951 when he met J. F. Gates ("Jack") Clarke, who remained a close friend for almost 40 years. Stan and Gordon Small decided in 1983 to deposit their collections jointly at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. At the time, their collection consisted of 42,500 pinned specimens, virtually all from the New World (Robbins & Clarke, 1986, *J. Lepid. Soc.* 40:106). Subsequent collecting and

extensive preparation of papered material has increased this donation to about 100,000 specimens.

Stan also had a close friendship with Arthur Allyn that began in the late 1960s when the Allyn Museum was housed in Chicago, Illinois, USA. For many years after the Allyn Museum moved to Sarasota (Florida, USA), Stan spent 2-3 weeks a year working on taxonomic papers with help from Art Allyn, Lee Miller, and Jackie Miller.

Stan was a charter member of the Lepidopterists' Society and was an active participant at annual meetings through 2004. He served as President in 1976, but perhaps his greatest contribution to the Society was as Treasurer (1969-1974). The Society was financially insolvent in 1969 because the Treasurer at that time had been "unable to function." Stan put the books in order and frankly told the Executive Council that there was an immediate shortfall of about \$1,500. He proposed



several remedies: raise dues, pursue paying memberships, and terminate foreign courtesy memberships. These measures were adopted at the 1971 meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, USA, and the late Arthur Allyn gave the Society \$1,500 to solve the immediate deficit. The Society has been solvent ever since.

Stan was active in the formation of The Butterfly Society of Virginia in 1992. This Society is primarily an organization of enthusiasts, and Stan served in a variety of capacities, most notably being an advisor and bringing in outside speakers.

One genus and seven species were named for Stan Nicolay. Patronyms in the Lycaenidae are *Nicolaea* Johnson 1990, *Calycopis nicolayi* Field 1967, *Strymon nicolayi* Johnson, Eisele, & MacPherson 1990, and *Arcas nicolayi* Salazar, & Constantino 1995. Patronyms in other families are *Aguna nicolayi* Austin & Mielke 1995 (Hesperiidae), *Napeogenes achaea nicolayi* Fox & Real 1971 (Nymphalidae), *Charis nicolayi* Hall & Harvey 2001 (Riodinidae), and *Calydna nicolayi* Hall 2002 (Riodinidae).

The skills that enabled Stan to survive as a Marine aviator included an innate ability to navigate and superb eyesight, both particularly valuable skills for a collector in a tropical rain forest. He had a strong sense of his ability to survive in adverse circumstances, which allowed him to make trips to the most remote parts of Latin America, always carrying a net.

Stan was a man of many passions. Besides the Marine Corps and various aspects of lepidopterology, he was active in orchid and bee-keeping organizations. He was a gifted teacher with a strong desire to share his knowledge, whether in the field or giving unrehearsed talks to schoolchildren. Perhaps his greatest passion, however, was as a story teller. Anyone who visited his home, accompanied him on a collecting trip, spent time with him at an annual meeting, or shared a meal of pollo a la brasa and beer was regaled by stories told with compassion, enthusiasm, a point-of-view, and humor. And if Stan liked something, it earned his trademark "Outstanding." It is this "human" side of Stan Nicolay that we will miss most.

Stan is survived by Lilian D. Nicolay, his wife of 62 years, sons Stephen C. and Joseph J. Nicolay, daughter-in-law Dawn Nicolay, and four grandchildren. We are grateful to Joe and Dawn for their kind and generous help in compiling information.

#### Scientific Publications of S. S. Nicolay

Nicolay, S. S. & G. B. Small, Jr. 1969. A new subspecies of *Pyrrhopyge creon* (Hesperiidae) from Panama. *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 23(2): 127-130, 3 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1971a. A new genus of hairstreak from Central and

South America (Lycaenidae, Theclinae). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 25(Suppl. 1): 1-39, 4 pls., 11 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1971b. A review of the genus *Arcas* with descriptions of new species (Lycaenidae, Strymonini). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 25(2): S7-108, 11 figs. 1971c.

Miller, L. D. & S. S. Nicolay. 1971c. Two new Charaxinae from Panama and the Canal Zone (Nymphalidae). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 1: 1-5, 2 pls., 2 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1973. Descriptions of new Neotropical Hesperidae. *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 27(4): 243-257, 35 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1975. Illustrations and descriptions of some Pyrrhopyginae from Panama (Hesperiidae). *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* 13(3): 181-190, 9 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1976. A review of the Hubnerian genera *Panthiades* and *Cycnus* (Lycaenidae: Eumaeini). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 35: 1-30, 25 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1977. Studies in the genera of American hairstreaks. 4. A new genus of hairstreak from Central and South America (Lycaenidae: Eumaeini). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 44: 1-24, 20 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1979. Studies in the genera of American hairstreaks. 5. A review of the Hubnerian genus *Parrhasius* and description of a new genus *Michaelis* (Lycaenidae: Eumaeini). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 56: 1-51, 45 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1980a. The genus *Chlorostymon* and a new subspecies of *C. simaethis*. *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 34(2): 253-256, 3 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1980b. Descriptions of new Hesperidae from Panama and Ecuador (Pyrginae and Hesperinae). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 59: 1-17, 17 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. & G. B. Small, Jr. 1981. Illustrations and descriptions of some species of Pyrrhopyginae from Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia. *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* 19(4): 230-239, 4 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 1982. Studies in the genera of American hairstreaks. 6. A review of the Hubnerian genus *Olynthus* (Lycaenidae: Eumaeini). *Bulletin of the Allyn Museum* 74: 1-30, 34 figs.

Robbins, R. K. & S. S. Nicolay. 1999a. Taxonomy and nomenclature of *Strymon istapa* and *S. columella* (Lycaenidae: Theclinae: Eumaeini). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 52(3): 315-327, 16 figs.

Robbins, R. K. & S. S. Nicolay. 1999b. Taxonomy of *Strymon toussainti*, *S. andrewi*, *S. amonensis*, and *S. rhapsos* (Lycaenidae: Theclinae). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 52(3): 328-334, 14 figs.

Nicolay, S. S. 2000. Book Review of *Revista de Theclinae Colombianos/Review of Colombian Theclinae*. 1997. *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 54(2): 76.

Robbins, R. K. & S. S. Nicolay. 2002. An overview of *Strymon* Hübner (Lycaenidae: Theclinae: Eumaeini). *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 55(3): S5-100.

Nicolay, S. S. & R. K. Robbins. 2005. Five new dry-area South American *Strymon* species (Lycaenidae: Theclinae) and their biogeographic significance. *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* 35: 35-49.

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